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Using Local, State, and Federal Dollars to Improve Pre-K to K Transitions

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Introduction

When children enter kindergarten, they have had at least five—for some nearly six—years of learning and development. Over these early years, they have mastered many words. They have played games with other kids, family members, and other adults. They have dug in the sand, felt grass, and pulled leaves off bushes. They have solved puzzles, created art, and listened to stories and songs. They have asked countless questions about the world around them and participated in countless interactions. For the year or two just before kindergarten, some children in the United States have attended a public pre-K or Head Start program. Others have spent that time in the pre-K room of a child care center or an in-home child care. Still others have spent their days with a parent, a family member, or a friend or neighbor down the block.

How do local education agencies (LEAs), elementary schools, and teachers learn about these experiences? How can they make sure the kindergarten year deepens and builds on children's previous learning? What are the best ways to keep children and families connected to school and engaged in learning? And how can LEAs, schools, and classroom teachers provide the smoothest transition possible into kindergarten? These are questions that states, LEAs, and public elementary schools must address or risk lost time, learning, and engagement. With only three years between kindergarten and the start of third grade, when most children begin taking state assessments, there is no time to begin from scratch.

Research on transition strategies and activities can help states, LEAs, and schools decide what to do, but district and building leaders must identify dollars for these initiatives. There are a number of federal programs that can help support state and local efforts to improve transitions for new kindergarteners and their families, including the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Head Start Act, and the Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG). ESSA includes the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program administered by the federal Department of Health & Human Services. For states awarded grants in December 2018, funding through PDG can be used for transition activities. There are also state programs that may include language that allow dollars to support transitions. Yet, in each of these programs, improved transitions for children are just one of many goals embedded in the program are competing for funding and time at the state and local level.

To help state and local leaders focus their efforts to support smooth transitions, especially into kindergarten, the sections that follow will discuss why transitions matter, highlight effective practices, explain funding streams that can support transition planning and activities, and share state and local examples.

Pre-K to K Transitions Matter

When early learning experiences are connected from birth through third grade (B-3rd), children and their families can more seamlessly transition into kindergarten. Smoothing transitions for children and families requires careful planning, effective policies and practices, and sustainable funding. Kindergarten is a big change for children and their families, especially for those who do not participate in public pre-K in a school setting. Educators can establish practices that put families more at ease, but the planning must begin well before the first day of school. On day one, teachers and schools should already have enough information to begin tailoring instruction, strategies, and environments to meet the needs of every kindergartener.

Attending to the transition into kindergarten can improve children's learning outcomes. Studies show connections between the number of transition activities schools provide and academic gains for low- and middle-income children as well as pre-K and kindergarten teacher perceptions of children's social skills and behavior.¹ But more does not always mean better. The available research shows the level of intensity in transition activities matter. Low-intensity activities, such as informational packets sent home to help families get ready for kindergarten are common, but these are not as beneficial for children and families as high-intensity activities, such as visits to kindergarten classrooms and joint planning time and data sharing for pre-K and kindergarten teachers.² And, while children from low-income families gain the most from frequent and intensive transition activities, they experience them the least.³

Undoubtedly, children and families need activities that engage them early and provide them with information and comfort as they begin the kindergarten year. But expanding thinking about transition activities to also encompass alignment and coordination across pre-K and the early grades will help create a truly seamless early educational experience. Children benefit when there are consistent high-quality learning environments and learning experiences across settings and sectors before school, in kindergarten, and through the early grades. Educators across PreK-3rd are key to making this happen. Efforts that bring adults together to align expectations, discipline strategies, curricula, assessments, instructional strategies, and learning environments and to share data, planning sessions, and professional development may be less visible to children and families but no less significant. In fact, these pieces may be the most critical for creating a seamless transition into kindergarten and each early grade thereafter.⁴

Requirements for Smoothing Transitions

According to the Education Commission of the States, nearly half of states and the District of Columbia have some requirement for transition planning either in statute or regulatory code, but the depth of the requirement varies as does the responsible entity.⁵ For example, California code specifies that school districts must provide “educational continuity from preschool through K-3” when the district offers public preschool programs. This includes providing opportunities for teachers and administrators in these programs as well as in elementary schools to come together for planning and professional development.⁶ In Maine, public preschool programs are required to have a process for providing transitions to kindergarten. Mississippi’s code says that transition plans for kindergarten are part of the Child Care Quality Step System. West Virginia requires every county to have a collaborative early childhood team that develops a plan for children transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten.⁷ The law goes on to specify that plans must include “an opportunity for teachers from each system to meet annually to discuss how to facilitate successful transitions,” among multiple other requirements.

In the most recent iteration of the federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), school districts must enter into agreements with Head Start programs serving children feeding into the district as well as with other early childhood programs, as possible.⁸ Head Start programs have always been required to establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with LEAs, but under ESSA the MOU requirement is now reciprocal, making it the responsibility of both Head Start (and other early childhood programs when possible) *and* LEAs to coordinate on several issues, including improving transitions for children and families. While not necessarily required, several other federal programs, state programs, and initiatives discussed below encourage states and LEAs to strengthen pre-K to K transitions and other transition points too.

Federal, State, and Other Funding Streams Can Support Transition Planning and Activities

The most meaningful transition activities require both human and financial resources. Investing in these activities can support deeper coordination, coherence, and alignment across the early learning continuum. While resources can be difficult to come by at times, states and LEAs can use multiple federal and state funding streams and guidance documents to plan and support transition efforts and to leverage and build on work the state or school district is already doing.

Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG)⁹ administered by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), asks states to explain how they will coordinate with other early childhood programs. States can leverage these dollars to bring educators together for planning and training purposes. Additionally, through dollars required to be set aside for quality, states can fund training as well as other activities they deem necessary to improve outcomes for children entering kindergarten.

The draft state plan template¹⁰ for implementation of CCDBG focuses on transition activities as potential uses of funds in various areas of the plan: “Section 1.4.1: Include in the descriptions the goals of this coordination, such as...smoothing transitions for children between programs or as they age into school”; and “Section 1.5.1: Describe, a minimum...your purpose and expected outcomes for combining funds, such as...smoothing transitions for children...”

States have incorporated transition activities into their CCDBG plans in a number of ways that highlights the array of support families and their children need during this period.

Pennsylvania: As part of its required coordination activities, the state works with a number of partners to support various transitions for children and their families.

¹¹ The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) supports a website, www.papromiseforchildren.org, that posts kindergarten registration dates, age cut-offs, and family-friendly resources to promote parent-child readiness activities. In addition, early childhood care and education stakeholder groups establish a feedback loop between OCDEL and program implementers with the goals of increasing coordination and smoothing transitions for children between child care, PA Pre-K Counts, and PA Head Start as well as transitions to the public school system.¹²

Florida: The state’s Office of Early Learning uses specific programmatic linkages to help improve transitions for families. The state has contracted with the University of South Florida to provide Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) to some families, with the goal of ensuring that children in

child care settings continue to have access to comprehensive services they need as they transition between programs.¹³

Tennessee: The state Department of Human Services has collaborated with the state's Department of Education to focus on alignment.¹⁴ As part of efforts to improve transitions for children moving between child care programs and into early elementary classrooms, the two agencies have aligned early learning standards across child care, pre-K, and kindergarten, and have included professional learning opportunities in order to help all educators improve quality and foster positive outcomes for children during these critical periods.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),¹⁵ administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), includes attention to children's transition from pre-K to K. State education agencies (SEAs) and LEAs are allowed to use Title I and Title II dollars to support smoother transitions, which can include joint professional training activities around transitions for pre-K and early elementary.¹⁶ LEAs are required to develop an MOU with Head Start programs to, among other things, support smooth transitions. Additionally, LEAs which use Title I funds to provide pre-K must describe how they will coordinate a transition plan with those programs. They are also encouraged to consider other early childhood education programs, which could include those offered in a variety of settings.

ED's 2016 non-regulatory early learning guidance suggests possible transition activities such as sharing assessment data, offering summer learning opportunities, engaging families, and providing joint professional development opportunities.¹⁷ The department's guidance also elevates the recurring themes in ESSA of alignment, collaboration, and coordination and points to vertical alignment up through third grade as one way to meet these goals. Aligning vertically means establishing ways to link pre-K and K-12 data and coordinating standards, curricula, instruction, assessment, expectations, and classroom strategies, which can ease the transition for children and families.

States have incorporated transition activities into their ESSA plans in different ways.

Connecticut: The state's ESSA plan¹⁸ includes a focus on transitions between early childhood programs and early elementary classrooms. The plan aims to:

- increase awareness of prevention/early intervention by including local early care and education providers in stakeholder engagement prior to development of the LEA plan for elementary schools;
- increase awareness of prevention/early intervention by including a required "landscape analysis" of local early care and education serving the LEA's students prior to enrollment in pre-K or kindergarten; and

- provide tiered technical assistance to LEAs in evidence-based practices about transition planning, such as shared curricula and pedagogy and data sharing.

The state Department of Education and the Office of Early Childhood created three tools¹⁹ to help districts create transition plans for all children and themselves, in order to understand the depth and breadth of early childhood support for families and to identify evidence-based practices in early learning as a support for professional development at the local level. The three tools have been widely advertised through statewide webinars and meetings, and Connecticut has provided additional technical support to districts as needed.

North Carolina: The state ESSA plan²⁰ builds on legislative priorities to make transitions between early childhood programs and schools an important component of district plans for implementation. The plan notes that the Department of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) "is in the process of identifying key transition plan components and will provide a planning template and guidance for developing a local transition plan. Local NC Pre-K committees will be responsible for developing and implementing local transition plans for their communities and are encouraged to address the following three objectives in an effort to move the transition to kindergarten experience forward:

1. Address the question of expectations.
2. Support and promote multiple modes and opportunities for communication among stakeholders but primarily parents, pre-kindergarten teachers, and kindergarten teachers.
3. Address issues of ownership of the transition process."

NCDPI has incorporated this focus into district implementation plans (known as the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan, or CCIP). In the 2019–2020 plan,²¹ NCDPI asks each district to attach a copy of the required MOU. In both the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years, the state provided additional guidance²² that helps districts think about the opportunity to include early learning in their plans and focuses on the role of transition planning in family engagement activities, professional learning, program design, and other coordination activities.

Rhode Island: While the state ESSA plan²³ has less specific language promoting successful transitions between early childhood and early elementary, the plan notes that "transitions occur at naturally occurring milestones, such as pre-K to K, elementary school to junior high or middle school, middle grades to high

school, and high school to post-graduate opportunities (e.g., employment, postsecondary study, military). The Rhode Island Department of Education will work with its LEAs to ensure that there are protocols, communications, and supports for students and their families as they reach each milestone.” As part of this effort, the state developed a guidance document for LEAs²⁴ that focuses on transitions to kindergarten.

Head Start Act,²⁵ administered by HHS, includes a section dedicated to transition and alignment with K-12 education as well as several other mentions of transition throughout the law. Funding can be used for training with both Head Start and school staff to smooth transitions, and programs are encouraged to think about all areas of transition²⁶ for children and their families, as well as for partners. Funding can be used to promote family involvement in school once children are in kindergarten by preparing families for elementary school expectations. Head Start programs are also required to establish MOUs with local school districts. The National Center on Teaching and Learning has developed guidance²⁷ to improve the quality and content of transitions at the district level.

North Carolina: NCDPI and the state Head Start Collaboration office have developed a coordinated checklist,²⁸ designed specifically for Head Start programs and LEAs to work together on a transition plan.

District of Columbia: The Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) has developed a detailed planning document²⁹ for Head Start programs and LEAs to implement as they transition children between programs. The checklist includes plans for professional learning, individual transition plans for children, individual agency commitments, timelines, and needed supports from OSSE, Head Start programs, and the LEA.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), administered by HHS, requires grant recipients to coordinate with comprehensive statewide early childhood systems, which includes early care and education.³⁰ Grantees are expected to develop policies and procedures in collaboration with other home visiting and early childhood partners to support families’ transitions between programs. An important goal is to sustain services for eligible families of children through kindergarten entry to ensure their needs are met. MOUs are required with state Title I or pre-K programs to help ensure these programs are involved in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), administered by ED, emphasizes smoothing transitions from early intervention to special education preschool to K-12 special and general education.³¹ IDEA Part C provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and IDEA Part B provides special education and related services to children and youth ages three through 21. Under Title I of ESSA, SEAs must coordinate with other programs providing services to young children, including IDEA.

Additionally, states are required by federal law to provide guidance to parents to help with transitions. Below is a sampling of documents created by states to do that:

- California's *Effective Early Childhood Transitions*³²
- West Virginia's *Early Childhood Transition Checklist*³³
- Nebraska's *Along the Way*³⁴
- Missouri's *Transition from Early Intervention*³⁵

Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5) is authorized by ESSA. The departments of HHS and ED awarded one-year grants in December 2018 to nearly every state. Among other things, states are encouraged to improve relationships between early childhood programs (horizontal alignment) and improve pre-K to kindergarten transitions (vertical alignment).³⁶ Awardees are required to engage in five activities, three of which are directly related to transitions. States will have the opportunity to apply for a second year of funding in the fall of 2019. States must conduct a needs assessment, which must include looking at “transition supports and gaps that affect how children move between early childhood care and education programs and school entry.”³⁷

Alaska: Improving the quality of transitions into elementary school is critical to improving outcomes. The state grant proposal³⁸ includes a number of activities to improve transitions, with a focus on providing parents with tools to navigate transition, by expanding their knowledge of child development, developmentally appropriate expectations, and developmental screenings. Alaska will also improve transitions by adopting a unified definition of school readiness, updating its Early Learning Guidelines, and providing training for early childhood providers in the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children, the Strengthening Families model, and trauma-informed practices to “expand shared language and frameworks used across systems.”

South Carolina: Plans for the Preschool Development Grant³⁹ includes improved transitions as a core concept, embedded in its strategic planning, parent engagement activities, and best practices. The state is using its funds to “expand the definition of transition and share best practices for relationship-based transitions among more kindergarten teachers, principals, and school administrators in the state.”

Iowa: Improved transitions for families are seen as a goal throughout Iowa's PDG application.⁴⁰ The needs assessment and strategic plan is designed to identify and address gaps faced by families during transition points, and to identify

resources to improve and strengthen collaboration between various partners working with families. As part of this effort, the state “will also explore family experiences in transitions between programs and between ECE and elementary schools.”

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), funded beginning in 2011, conducted three rounds of competition. In all, 20 states were awarded RTT-ELC grants to complete ambitious plans to meet multiple priorities. One of the RTT-ELC priorities was “creating approaches to sustain improved early learning outcomes through the early elementary grades” and the program encouraged states to develop a plan for improving all transitions for children across the B–3rd continuum.⁴¹

Colorado: Recognizing that there were kindergarten teachers and elementary school administrators who did not have a deep understanding of developmentally appropriate practice for young children, Colorado’s School Readiness Team developed resources and materials to support developmentally appropriate practices, child development, and optimal learning environments for children in kindergarten. The School Readiness Team has also provided training and technical assistance to districts and created the *Kindergarten School Readiness Guide to Implementation and Best Practices*.

Delaware: As an RTT-ELC grantee, the state created 20 Delaware Readiness Teams to strengthen community and education linkages for children from birth to age eight. Made up of families, early childhood providers, public school teachers, and community and business leaders, the teams created action plans to support young children and their families in a variety of ways, including positive transitions for school success. After RTT-ELC funds expired, the work has been sustained and supported by the state departments of Health and Social Services and Education, PNC Bank, Nemours, Rodel Foundation of Delaware, the Arsht Canon Fund, Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, and United Way of Delaware.

Massachusetts: From 2012 to 2015, the state provided Birth to Grade Three (B–3rd) Community Implementation/Planning grants to 12 communities across the state. Communities used the funding in a variety of ways, including strengthening family engagement, improving alignment and transitions among community-based early learning programs and public schools, improving third grade literacy scores, providing professional development opportunities for public school teachers and administrators, and implementing school readiness activities.

Pennsylvania: The state’s Community Innovation Zone grant program has focused on coordination within localities to strengthen connections between early childhood programs and school districts; increase family supports and engagement; and link local organizations serving young children and their families to promote school readiness and future school success.

State Pre-K Programs require, for the most part, that they provide transition to kindergarten activities. For example, as part of West Virginia Universal Pre-K, each county must develop a plan with activities, information, and timelines to help early childhood teachers and kindergarten teachers support smooth transitions for children and families. Two of these activities must include opportunities for pre-K and kindergarten teachers to meet together and a countywide system for transferring assessment data. Funding from ESSA and the Head Start Act could be used to expand the pot of available dollars for these kinds of activities.

Other Sources include **local philanthropic** or **community organizations**, which may provide dollars to support alignment and coherence across pre-K, K, and the early grades as well as specific pre-K to K transition activities and support for families. For example, Fairfax Futures in Virginia partners with county agencies, public schools, area corporations, foundations, community organizations, and early childhood education programs to support positive transitions to kindergarten. The organization partners with the Fairfax County Office for Children and Fairfax County Public Schools to sponsor an Annual School Readiness Symposium for early childhood educators. It is also home to the Neighborhood School Readiness Project, which includes teams made up of county, school, and community organizations that collaborate to ensure positive transitions to kindergarten in select Title I schools across the county.

For more information about federal programs and other funding streams discussed above see *Appendix II: Federal Programs with Language Related to Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions*.

Actions for States, LEAs, and Elementary Schools

SEAs, LEAs, and elementary schools have the power to make the transition into kindergarten easier for children and families regardless of their previous early childhood experiences. By providing high-intensity transition activities and by aligning processes, strategies, and learning across ages birth to five and grades K–3, schools will be more ready to meet the needs of their new students and families, and children will be more at ease as they begin their first day of kindergarten. Using federal, state, and local funding sources, states, LEAs, and schools should consider the actions below in order to ensure smooth transitions into kindergarten.

Four actions for states

1. Take stock of practices being implemented across the state. Ask key questions to determine how LEAs are supporting the transition into kindergarten: Are districts leaving transitions to schools to figure out on their own? Does the district offer guidance? What questions are asked on enrollment forms about children’s previous educational experiences? Does the district provide opportunities for cross-sector learning (i.e., bringing teachers and leaders from early learning programs and elementary schools together)? How can schools find out about programs that typically feed into their kindergarten classrooms? Are there agreements to share data between the district and early childhood programs?
2. Develop guidance for LEAs and schools to strengthen transition efforts and deepen alignment, coordination, and collaboration across the PreK–3rd and even B–3rd continuum. States can foster opportunities for these diverse early learning leaders to come together for joint professional development and discussions of how to better connect pre-K, kindergarten, and the early grades.
3. Require LEAs to develop district transition strategies with the participation of stakeholders that include representatives from Head Start and other early childhood programs, teachers, parents, representatives from relevant district offices, and principals. These strategies should pay attention to populations such as children with disabilities, children from low-income families, children in tribal communities, homeless children, and English learners.

4. Look to federal funding streams or engage philanthropic organizations for dollars to encourage stronger transition efforts at the local level. Use regional offices to bring district, community, and school leaders together to build relationships and develop plans for working together. For instance, give grants to LEAs that prioritize high-intensity activities, such as data sharing and cross-sector professional development, over low-intensity activities, such as summer kindergarten packets.

Five actions for LEAs

1. Go beyond the ESSA requirement to establish agreements with Head Start programs and extend agreements to other early childhood programs serving children that will likely attend district schools. Use these partnerships to facilitate smooth transitions for students and their families. These agreements should include elements such as data sharing and joint professional development across sectors and plans to align curricula, teaching strategies, discipline practices, family engagement strategies, and ways to meet community needs.
2. Create opportunities to build elementary school principal knowledge of early childhood education and how to support PreK-3rd teachers. This could be through principal professional development or as a recurring topic for principal meetings.
3. Get to know organizations supporting Head Start and other early childhood programs and come up with strategies for connecting principals, program administrators, and teachers to build relationships across pre-K and the early grades of elementary school. This should become a two-way learning opportunity for both center educators and elementary school educators. School districts could also work with regional child care referral offices to establish processes for connecting schools and early education programs. Districts and other community programs could collaborate to develop activities for children and families that support them as they move into kindergarten.
4. Take steps to ensure children are able to transition into kindergarten at the elementary school parents have chosen for pre-K. Work to establish feeder relationships and agreements with other community-based pre-K programs within a school's attendance zone.
5. Develop strategies needed to encourage collaboration across pre-K and kindergarten, to share information and data, and to align discipline

approaches, instruction, environments, curricula, and other areas as needed. Even when a pre-K classroom is located in an elementary school, smooth transitions are not a given for children and families.

Four actions for elementary schools

1. Study the surrounding community. Principals should understand the early childhood programs that typically feed into their kindergarten program. In many LEAs, parents have a great deal of choice in where to send their children for elementary school, which can make identifying feeder programs complicated. Start by including questions about children's previous educational experiences on school registration forms and then reaching out to the directors of those programs prior to the first day of school.
2. Establish joint planning time for pre-K and kindergarten teachers, as not all pre-K, Head Start, or early childhood programs are located outside of the elementary school building. Even when pre-K is located in a school building, transitions can be bumpy. Joint professional development and planning can help to better connect the learning and expectations across these years.
3. Consider appointing or hiring a "P-3 Coordinator" at the school (part-time or full-time) to connect with families before kids reach kindergarten. Offer parent support and help link families to needed services.
4. Ask a diverse group of families what they found most helpful for their move into kindergarten and build activities and information based on what is learned.

Conclusion

Leaders in states, school districts, schools, and communities should act to ensure that early childhood experiences, pre-K, kindergarten, and the early grades, are all part of a set of well-connected steps for children to ascend as they move through their schooling. Multiple, high-intensity transition activities help give children a strong start to the kindergarten year and put families at ease. Aligning and coordinating expectations for children and what and how they are taught and assessed, and connecting educators across PreK-3rd helps to ensure children's learning is deepened and built upon throughout their early education. Taking advantage of the funding streams available and implementing the actions above will be a big help in creating the seamless educational experience that young students need, one which will also support families.

Appendix I: Resources

Office of Head Start's transitions website, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Connecting the Steps: State Strat, New America, 2017

Early Matters: Integrating Attendance Into Kindergarten Transition, Attendance Works, 2019

Promoting Seamless Transitions from Preschool to Kindergarten and Beyond, *Voices in Urban Education* magazine, 2016

Transitions and Alignment from Preschool to Kindergarten, Education Commission of the States, 2018

Terrific Transitions: Ensuring Continuity of Services for Children and their Families, SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005

Appendix II: Federal Programs with Language Related to Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)	To allow states flexibility in developing child care programs and policies, to empower families with choice, and to ensure that children from low-income families have access to high-quality care.	<p>•(p. 11) Section 5(T)I: States must maintain and implement early learning guidelines that are “aligned with entry to kindergarten.”</p> <p>•(p. 20) Section 658G(B)10: “Funds reserved under subsection (a) shall be used to carry out no fewer than one of the following activities that will improve the quality of child care services provided in the State including carrying out other activities determined by the State to improve the quality of child care services provided in the State, and for which measurement of outcomes relating to entry to kindergarten is possible.”</p>
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	To provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.	<p>•(p. 50) Section 1112(b)8: Each LEA plan will support, coordinate, and integrate services provided with early childhood education programs and “plans for the transition of participants in such programs to local elementary school programs.”</p> <p>•(p. 63) Section 1114(b)7A(iii)V: Eligible schools shall develop a comprehensive plan with “activities which may include strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to local elementary school programs.”</p>

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
		<p>•(p. 65) Section 1115(b)2C: Targeted assistance programs shall serve participating students “by coordinating with and supporting the regular education program, which may include services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school programs.”</p> <p>•(p. 79) Section 1119: This entire section is dedicated to coordination between the LEA, Head Start agency, and other early childhood education programs, including by implementing procedures for receiving records; establishing channels of communication between school sta ; conducting meetings involving parents, elementary school teachers, and teachers from early education programs to discuss the needs of individual children; and organizing joint transition-related training of school staff.</p> <p>•(p. 157) Section 2101(c)4B(xvi): Formula grants to states may be used to support “opportunities for principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education program providers to participate in joint efforts to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.”</p>

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
		<p>•(p. 164) Section 2103(b)3G(ii): LEAs receiving subgrants may address “the ability of principals or other school leaders to support teachers, teacher leaders, early childhood educators, and other professionals to meet the needs of students through age 8, which may include providing joint professional learning and planning activities for school staff and educators in preschool programs that address the transition to elementary school.”</p> <p>•(p. 204) Section 3131(6): Grants received under section 3111(c)(1)(C) may be used to support professional development including “strategies that promote school readiness of English learners and their transition from early childhood education programs, such as Head Start or State-run preschool programs, to elementary school programs.”</p>
Head Start Act	To promote the school readiness of low-income children in learning environments that support children’s growth, and to provide comprehensive social services to families, as needed.	<p>•(p. 23) Section 641A(a)1A: “The Secretary shall modify program performance standards by regulation applicable to Head Start agencies and programs under this subchapter, including performance standards with respect to services required to be provided, including health, parental involvement, nutritional, and social services, transition activities described in section 642A, and other services.”</p>

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">•(p. 24) Section 641A(a)2B(viii): The Secretary will take into consideration “mechanisms to ensure that children participating in Head Start programs make a successful transition to the schools that the children will be attending” when developing standards.•(p. 35) Section 642(b)13: To be designated, Head Start agencies must serve families by promoting “the continued involvement of the parents and caregivers of children that participate in Head Start programs in the education of their children upon transition of their children to school, by working with the LEA to provide training to the parents, to inform the parents about their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children, and to enable the parents to understand and work with schools.”•(p. 42) Section 642(e)2A: To be designated, Head Start agencies must “collaborate and coordinate with public and private entities, to the maximum extent practicable, to improve the availability and quality of services to Head Start children and families,” including by outreach activities to identify eligible children, communication with the schools in which the children will enroll, and professional development with instructional strategies to ease transitions.

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)	To strengthen and improve coordination of comprehensive services for families in at-risk communities.	<p>•(p. 43) Section 642(e)5A(ii)VIII: Head Start Agencies must “enter into an MOU with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start agency, that shall include plans to coordinate communications and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten as required in paragraphs (3) and (6) of section 642A(a).”</p> <p>•(p. 45) Section 10, 642A: Head Start Transition and Alignment with K–12 Education- Each Head Start agency shall take steps to coordinate with the LEA and with schools in which children participating in a Head Start program. The goal of the coordination should be to promote continuity of services and effective transitions. The section lists several activities agencies should engage in.</p> <p>•(p. 61) Section 682(d)2E: Programs deemed “centers of excellence” may earn bonus grants, which may be applied “to provide effective transitions between Head Start programs and elementary schools.”</p>
		<p>•(p. 2) Section 1(2): “An early childhood system aims to: ...ensure stability and continuity of services along a continuum from pregnancy to kindergarten entry;... support continuity of services, eliminate duplicative services, ease transitions, and improve the overall service experience for families and children.”</p>

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
		<p>•(p. 6) Section I(2): Recipients must coordinate with statewide early childhood programs, establish referral networks, and develop a network of home-visiting services from birth through kindergarten entry. Recipients must also develop MOU with their state’s early childhood and family service providers.</p>
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	To ensure that infants, toddlers, children with disabilities, and their families have their rights protected and “a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs,” and to support federal, state, and local agencies that serve children with disabilities.	<p>•Section 1411(e)2C: State-level authorized activities including “development and implementation of transition programs,” professional development and training for sta who work with children with disabilities, and technical assistance and support to LEAs.</p> <p>•Section 1413(a)4A: Funds to authorized LEAs may be used “to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening educational services in accordance with subsection (f)” and to provide services and aids that also support nondisabled children.</p> <p>•Section 1419(a): Preschool grants to states may be used to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities aged 3 to 5</p> <p>•Section 1419(f): Preschool grants to states may also be used for activities including coordinating services and providing early intervention services.</p>

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
		<p>●Section 1436(d): Individualized Family Service Plans, statewide plans for families of infants and toddlers with disabilities, will identify a family services coordinator and include “the steps to be taken to support the transition of the toddler with a disability to preschool or other appropriate services.”</p>
Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B–5)	To allow states to implement a strategic plan that coordinates existing programs of early childhood education, to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children for kindergarten, and to improve transitions from early care into elementary schools.	<p>●(p. 3–4) Section I Program Activities: All states applying for PDG grants must apply funds towards 5 specific activities.</p> <p>○Activity 2 stipulates that states must include “activities to improve children’s transition from early childhood care and education programs into elementary schools,” with opportunities for and barriers to collaboration between entities, in their strategic plans.</p> <p>○Activity 3 engages families in the decision-making process for children’s enrollment and transitions to elementary school.</p> <p>○Activity 4 describes sharing best practices between early education providers.</p> <p>●(p. 5) Section I Program Approach: The state should serve as a facilitator for collaboration among a broad range of early care and education providers, such as “program directors and staff across child-serving agencies and programs, including preschool and K–12 school districts.”</p>

Law or Program	Program Purpose	Language Relating to Transitions
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)		<p>•(p. 11) Section I Future Eligibility for Renewal Grants: States awarded initial PDG B–5 Grants will have the opportunity to apply for renewal grants in years 2 and 4 to expand access to programming and increase activities provided.</p>
		<p>•(p. 28) Section IV.2 State B–5 Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement: Applicants must describe “how the State’s vision will increase the quality, coordination, alignment, and efficiency of programs and services, including improving transitions from early childhood care and education programs into the elementary grades.”</p>
		<p>•(p. 29) Section IV.2 B–5 Statewide Needs Assessment Plan: Applicants must conduct a needs assessment that addresses “transition supports and gaps that affect how children move between early childhood care and education programs and school entry.”</p>
		<p>•Section 14005(d)6B of the American Recovery Act - States will "design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services."</p>

Notes

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